

Internal Newsletters

Virtually every medium to large company - government and non-government - produces internal publications. They come under different names, such as newsletters, newspapers, magazines and bulletins.

If you search around any Federal building there will be one in every agency, in one form or another. Like the Veterans Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Marshal Service, Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Secret Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Land Reclamation, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Agency. Some are produced at a district or regional office, but they nearly all have one.

It will be easier for you to obtain water safety space in pubs that are written and designed in your area. The higher you go, and the more professionally produced, the harder it will be to get your water safety material inserted. For example, the U.S. Marshal Service publishes *The Pinnacle* from Washington, D.C. It will be nearly impossible for you to get the editor to place one of your water safety slicks in their colorful pub. Staying local is good advice.

It is easy with the local agencies. Here's what you do. Go "editor hunting." Stop in every government office and ask to see a copy of their internal publication. Obtain a copy if possible. Flip to the masthead. It has the editor, publications address, room number and telephone number. Find the office. If the publication is Federal, probably 90 percent will be created by the Public Affairs Office.

State and local governments normally title their publication offices Public Relations, Informational Services, Public Information Office, etc. Even some Personnel Offices publish the newsletter.

Once you've located the person who says "yes," and normally it will be the editor, show him or her your water safety material. Helping the Corps save lives on the waterways is your reason for being there.

Your material is considered a "filler" because it can be used to fill a hole on the page too small for a story. Explain how your slicks come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Exchange business cards. Check to see how often the publication is printed. Once the editor says yes, gently, ever so gently try to obtain the editor's permission to print slicks in future editions - maybe one per issue. You will never know until you ask.

Remember, each scenario will be different. If the editor begrudgingly gives you the okay for one filler, then getting one is a victory and you will not want to ask for additional coverage at that time. Your return to their office - after the hardy handshake, smile and thanks - may be the best time to "hit" the person for additional space. However, "strike while the permission granting iron is hot" is a guiding adage to go by. A rule of thumb is: "The happier the person, the more you will receive."

The state's fish and wildlife agencies are always looking for camera-ready water safety fillers. They print water safety manuals, fishing, boating and hunting regulation guides, etc., and your slicks might be just what they need.

Other agencies like the Tennessee Valley Authority, American Red Cross and U.S. Power Squadron will help. Remember our U.S. Coast Guard friends, too. Any agency with water jurisdiction, or one with health involvement, will be sympathetic to your cause. The local lake organizations, police and sheriff's departments are always looking for camera-ready art. Cities located near the water also print publications and will help you. Check with the Chamber of Commerce, for example. You will be surprised how civic and fraternal groups will help, too.

So, weld a smile to your face, get your right hand ready for handshaking and practice saying "Thank you" in a mirror until it becomes as easy as breathing. You're on your way. Shortly, you will soon discover just how easy this technique really is.

Always, always, get extra copies of the publications and let your boss and others see how the water safety word is traveling.

We'll see you at the editor's office. Good luck.